



## Secretary Peter James Gravett

California Department of Veterans Affairs



Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr. appointed Peter James Gravett to his Cabinet as Secretary of the California Department of Veterans Affairs on April 29, 2011.

Major General Gravett (Ret) was born in Little Rock, Arkansas and raised in San Pedro, California. Gravett retired with more than 40 years of military service in the U.S. Army and the California National Guard, including 35 in which he was a commissioned officer in the National Guard with service in numerous countries, including Central Europe, Western Europe, Asia and Central America. In 2006 he was selected by the Assistant Secretary of Defense to serve as the State Chair for the Southern California Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) Committee where he served until 2009.

Before retiring from the Guard, he served as Commanding General of the 40th Infantry Division from 1999 to 2002. At that time he was promoted to Major General, becoming the first African-American National Guard division commander in the 225-year history of the National Guard in the United States. While in this command, Gravett served a dual assignment in Kiev, Ukraine with the Partnership for Peace Program. Previously, Gravett served as Assistant Division Commander from 1996, when he was promoted to Brigadier General, to 1999. His previous commands include Company, Battalion and Brigade levels. He also held key staff assignments at the same levels including serving as Division Chief of Staff. Throughout his career, Gravett has been presented with more than 20 awards and decorations including the Distinguished Service Medal and the Legion of Merit.

Gravett's post active military affiliations include the American Legion, AMVETS, the Military Order of World Wars, The Military Officers Association of America, 9th and 10th (Horse) Cavalry Association (Buffalo Soldiers), Association of the United States Army, National Association of Black Military Officers, National Guard Associations of the United States and California, Southern California Advisory Council (Retired Officers), 40th Infantry Division Association and The Fall Gathering (Retired Flag Officers). Gravett also served as President of the Los Angeles Mayor's Veterans Advisory Council. He holds an honorary membership with the Sergeants Major Association and the Orange County Chapters of the Chosin Few.

Gravett is also a member of Mission Readiness, a group of retired Generals and Admirals that is focusing on childhood obesity.

While serving in the National Guard, Gravett simultaneously served more than 22 years with the Los Angeles Police Department. He was awarded LAPD's highest award, the Medal of Valor, for saving the life of a teenage boy who was being severely beaten by a mob outside a sporting event at the L.A. Coliseum. Prior to retirement from the LAPD, Gravett served in a myriad of uniform, staff, and investigative positions that included supervision, management, and police support services.

After leaving the police department, Gravett served as President and Chief Executive Officer of Gravett and Associates, a homeland security consulting firm, and as a principal with Traidan Global Solutions, an emergency preparedness consulting firm.

His education includes receiving a Bachelor of Science degree in criminology from California State University, Long Beach, and a Master's of Public Administration from the University of Southern California, and Executive diplomas from the University of Virginia and from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. Gravett is also a graduate of the U.S. Army War College and the FBI National Academy.

Gravett's late father served as an enlisted soldier in a Tuskegee Airman's unit during World War II and he is one of 12 children, 9 of whom served in the military. Gravett resides in Rolling Hills Estates with his wife Blanche, a retired educator and a retired Army National Guard Colonel. He has one son, Mark, who is a professional chef, and daughter-in-law Grace.